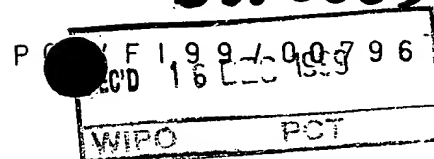


Helsinki 29.10.1999

F199/796

ETUOIKEUSTODISTUS
PRIORITY DOCUMENT

09/806300



EJW



Hakija
Applicant

Nokia Telecommunications Oy
Helsinki

Patenttihakemus nro
Patent application no

982098

Tekemispäivä
Filing date

29.09.1998

Kansainvälinen luokka
International class

H04Q

Keksinnön nimitys
Title of invention

"Reporting credit/charging information to a mobile subscriber"

(Saldo/veloitustiedon raportointi matkaviestintilaaajalle)

**PRIORITY
DOCUMENT**
SUBMITTED OR TRANSMITTED IN
COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 17.1(a) OR (b)

Täten todistetaan, että oheiset asiakirjat ovat tarkkoja jäljennöksiä patentti- ja rekisterihallitukselle alkuaan annetuista selityksestä, patenttivaatimuksista, tiivistelmästä ja piirustuksista.

This is to certify that the annexed documents are true copies of the description, claims, abstract and drawings originally filed with the Finnish Patent Office.


Pirjo Kaila
Tutkimussihteeri

Maksu 300,- mk
Fee 300,- FIM

Osoite: Arkadiankatu 6 A Puhelin: 09 6939 500
P.O.Box 1160 Telephone: + 358 9 6939 500
FIN-00101 Helsinki, FINLAND

Telefax: 09 6939 5204
Telefax: + 358 9 6939 5204

Reporting credit/charging information to a mobile subscriber

Background of the invention

The invention relates to methods and equipment for reporting charging information to mobile subscribers, such as reporting the amount of available credit to prepaid subscribers. In mobile communications systems, such as GSM, use of prepaid SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) cards is increasing. Prepaid SIM cards relieve the network operators of credit losses. They enable parents to set an upper limit for the telephone bill beforehand. As a third benefit, they enable roaming subscribers to pay their local calls with local tariffs, whereas using the SIM card of their home operator, results in paying international tariffs to their home network and back.

A problem with prepaid SIM cards is that current mobile stations (handsets) are not provided with means for automatically displaying credit-related information, such as the current credit status, immediately after ending of the call. Some operators allow the subscribers to call an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) service which reports the available credit by synthesized speech. Such a service causes another problem: using the IVR causes a significant amount of overhead traffic in the radio interface. This non-chargeable traffic consumes resources which could be better spent to chargeable calls.

Disclosure of the invention

An object of the invention is to provide a mechanism for reporting the available credit status for prepaid subscribers in a way which allows reducing the overhead traffic load in the radio interface. To discourage users from calling the IVR, the mechanism according to the invention must be fast enough, so that the users will not experience annoying delays. These objects are achieved with a method and equipment which are characterized by what is disclosed in the attached independent claims. Preferred embodiments of the invention are disclosed in the attached dependent claims.

According to one embodiment, at call termination, a service logic program (SLP) handling the call in a Service Control Point (SCP) sends the credit information (e.g. via a LAN connection) to a program running on a separate processor or workstation WS. This program then reformats and passes on the information (e.g. via another LAN) to the Short Message Service Center (SMSC), which sends the actual short message to the mobile station. The LAN connections can be standard TCP/IP connections. The protocol between the

SCP and the workstation can be a specific protocol which is used via an Applications Programming Interface (API). The protocol used between the WS and e.g. Nokia's SMSC is denoted Computer Interface to Message Distribution-2 (CIMD-2). The program running on the workstation is typically written in C++.

5 To use the API, the programmer has to insert statements in the Service Logic Program (SLP) and write a separate C++ program for receiving the information. CIMD-2 is a simple character based protocol, where a client process makes requests to the server and the server responds.

The basic idea behind the solution is to utilise both the above-mentioned interfaces to make a direct connection from the SCP to the SMSC, thus reducing the time delay from the termination of the call to the time the information is sent as an SMS. This short time is the main advantage of this solution and experiments performed by the inventor in a test platform have shown that the mobile station can receive the short message in 1 to 5 seconds from the termination of the call.

15 Optionally, releasing the call will be delayed whereby the message according to the invention can be delivered without a separate page message.

Preferably, the information is extracted from the SCP, because no problems due to propagation delay arise. The SLPs (Service Logic Programs handling the calls) being executed on the SCP provide functionality for communicating with an external process through a gateway between services running inside the Service Logic Execution Environment (SLEE) and external applications. More specifically, the SLPs can send messages to an external process via a socket. The external process runs on a separate computer or workstation, and therefore it does not influence the performance of the SCP. The SLP handling a pre-paid call runs during the whole call, since it controls the credit updating. This means it will know when the call has finished. An addition of some SLP code in the end of the pre-paid SLP, could then send out the wanted information to the external process.

30 Yet another solution is to use the SS7 network for sending the information between the SCP and the SMSC. This solution apparently requires the use of MAP protocol. As an advantage, no new elements (network connections, programs) would be introduced.

Brief description of the drawings

35 The invention will be described in more detail by means of preferred embodiments with reference to the appended drawing wherein:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a mobile communications network equipped with an arrangement according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a signalling diagram illustrating one embodiment of the invention; and

Fig 3 depicts a mobile station after receiving and displaying a short message according to the invention.

Detailed description of the invention

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a mobile communications network equipped with an arrangement according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. This embodiment makes use of Intelligent Network technology. An intelligent network (IN) is able to provide a subscriber of a telecommunications network, such as a wired network or a mobile telephone network, with a plurality of various services. Such services include a virtual private network (VPN) which allows the use of short numbers between subscribers belonging to a local network, and a personal number in which the intelligent network reroutes the calls directed to a personal number in a manner controlled by the subscriber. An example of such an intelligent network is described in recommendations of the ITU-T Q-1200 series, of which Q-1210 to Q-1219 define a set of features known as CS-1 (Capability Set 1), and correspondingly, Q-1220 to Q-1229 define a set of features CS-2. The invention and its background will be described by the terminology of recommendation ETS 300 374-1 CoreINAP, but the invention can also be employed in intelligent networks implemented according to other intelligent network standards.

A basic call state model (BCSM), defined in connection with the intelligent network, describes different stages of call control and defines the points in which call control can be interrupted in order to start an intelligent network service. It identifies the detection points in the call and connection process in which service logic entities of the intelligent network can have an interactive relationship with basic call and connection management features.

In conventional call set-up which takes place without the help of an intelligent network, telephone exchanges make independently all the deductions about call routing. One or more service control functions (SCF) are associated with intelligent network architecture. The equipment or network element carrying out the tasks determined for the SCF is called a service control point (SCP). In the present invention, SCF and SCP are equal, and will hereinafter

be called SCP. The SCP gives call set-up instructions to the exchange, or the exchange may inquire call set-up instructions from the SCP. If the interface of subscriber B is found to be busy at some stage of call set-up, for example, the call can be directed to an alternative number. Service data function SDF and
 5 service data point SDP form a database comprising subscriber-specific and/or service-specific information.

Service switching function (SSF) is an interface between the call control function CCF and the service control function SCF. The network element performing the SSF is called a service switching point (SSP). An intelligent network service is produced by the service switching point SSP inquiring
 10 instructions from the service control point SCP by means of messages to be transmitted across the SSP/SCP interface upon the encounter of detection points associated with the services. In intelligent network terminology these messages are called operations. In association with an intelligent network
 15 service, a service program is started at the service control point SCP, the operation of the program determining the operations transmitted by the SCP to the SSP at each stage of a call.

Fig. 2 is a signalling diagram illustrating a preferred embodiment of the invention. The scenario shown in Fig. 2 begins in step 2-0 wherein the MS
 20 sends CALL SETUP signalling to the MSC. In this example, it will be assumed that call establishment takes place under IN control, but this is not necessary to the invention. Another assumption, made here, is that the IN is also responsible for keeping track of the available credit of the prepaid SIM card. In step 2-2, the MSC sends the SCP an INITIAL DETECTION POINT (IDP) message, the
 25 parameters of which comprise a Service key Skey1 and the calling and called party numbers A# and B#. Service key Skey1 identifies the IN service in question. In step 2-4, the SCP sends the MSC a REQUESTREPORTBCSMEVENT message, indicating which detection points the MSC must report to the SCP.

One such interesting detection point is the one that concerns termination of
 30 calls. In step 2-6, the SCP sends the MSC a CONTINUE message which directs the MSC to route the call normally. (Alternatively, the SCP might send a CONNECT message indicating an alternative number, but such variations are irrelevant for understanding the actual invention.) Step 2-8 comprises all the necessary steps for call establishment to the called party B. For clarity, such
 35 routine steps are not shown separately. In step 2-10, the MS terminates the call by sending a DISCONNECT message. In step 2-12, the MSC sends the SCP

an EVENTREPORTBCSM message indicating disconnection from the originating side. In step 2-14 the SCP returns a FURNISHCHARGINGINFORMATION message to the MSC. In response to the CONTINUE message in step 2-16, the MSC releases the resources allocated to the call in step 2-18. Again, such routine steps are not shown separately.

According to one embodiment of the invention, in step 2-20, the MSC sends the SCP a second IDP message, having as its parameters a second Service key (Skey2) and the calling party number A#. Service key Skey2 identifies the supplementary service for indicating the available credit to the prepaid subscriber. The next two steps make use of a separate workstation WS, although these steps could also be implemented by means of a process being executed in the SCP. Next, in step 2-22, the SCP sends the WS a message requesting the WS to format a short message indicating the credit information. Preferably, the credit information comprises the duration and price of the last call, and the amount and lifetime of available credit. In step 2-24 the WS sends this information to the Short Message Service Center SMSC, which, in step 2-26 sends it to the MS in a suitably formatted short message.

Fig. 3 shows a mobile station MS after receiving and displaying the short message of step 2-24. In a bi- or multi-lingual country like Finland or Switzerland, the workstation SW might make use of subscriber's language (stored in the HLR) and format the message accordingly.

Based on the above example, several variations will be obvious to a skilled reader. For example, it was assumed, that the SCP takes care of both call processing and keeping track of the available credit of the prepaid SIM card, and that the SCP stored the available credit to an IN database called Service Data Point (SDP, not shown separately). This is why the available credit did not have to be transferred to the SCP in the beginning of the call. Of course, keeping track of the available credit can take place in the MSC, whereby the IN call control (steps 2-2 to 2-6 and 2-12 to 2-16) is unnecessary. Alternatively, the SCP could perform call control but the MSC might keep track of the prepaid credit. In this case, only step 2-14 is unnecessary.

As a yet further alternative, the IN call control and the credit reporting according to the invention could be integrated so that sending the CONTINUE message to the MSC in step 2-16 would also trigger sending the FORMATSHORTMESSAGE message to the WS in step 2-22. In other words, the message in step 2-20 is unnecessary. However, for reasons of compatibility

with different implementation options, in the example shown in Fig. 2, the SCP reports the credit information to the MSC in step 2-14, and the MSC returns the credit information back to the SCP in step 2-20. In this way, the credit reporting service according to the invention (steps 2-20 to 2-26) is compatible with all combinations of call control and credit tracking under the MSC or the SCP.

Although sending the credit information as a short message is considered the best mode, other transmission channels could be used. A possible alternative transmission method is using USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data), which is defined in references 2 to 4. However, network-initiated USSD is only possible with Phase 2 mobile stations. Short message transmission and USSD transmission can be commonly referred to as connectionless transmissions because the information is simply transmitted to the recipient, without establishing an end-to-end connection.

The invention can be used for transmitting any kind of credit/charging information the transmission of which is triggered in response to ending a call. Preferably, the credit/charging information comprises the current credit status, the duration of last call, the price of last call and the validity period of the SIM card. Although the invention has been described in connection with prepaid subscriptions, it is not a strict requirement that the subscription is prepaid. As an alternative, subscribers may wish to set an upper limit for the monthly telephone bill. Thus, even if a mobile telephone is stolen, the amount of damage could be restricted to the predefined upper limit, and parents can set an upper limit to the monthly telephone bill of their children. The invention is equally suitable for transmitting the available charging limit (the predefined upper limit minus the accumulated, but not yet invoiced, charge).

References:

1. GSM 02.90: European digital cellular telecommunications system (Phase 2); Stage 1 description of Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD)
2. GSM 03.90: Digital cellular telecommunications system (Phase 2); Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) - Stage 2
3. GSM 04.90: European digital cellular telecommunications system (Phase 2); Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) - Stage 3

All references are incorporated herein by reference.

Claims

1. A method for transmitting credit/charging information to a mobile station (MS);

5 characterized in that the method comprises the steps of:
detecting a termination (2-10) of a call chargeable to the subscriber of the mobile station (MS);

in response to said detecting, sending said credit/charging information to the mobile station (MS) as a connectionless message (2-26).

2. A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the method
10 further comprises the steps of:

defining an upper limit for the accumulated price of telephone calls;

monitoring the accumulated price of telephone calls;

allowing a new call only if the accumulated price of telephone calls is less than the upper limit.

15 3. A method according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said connectionless message is a short message.

4. A method according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said connectionless message is a USSD message.

20 5. A method according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that after detecting said termination (2-10) of the call, releasing the call (2-18) is delayed sufficiently for sending said connectionless message without paging the mobile station (MS) separately.

25 6. A method according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that an Intelligent Network node, preferably a Service Control Point (SCP):

requests (2-4) a Mobile Services Switching Centre (MSC) to report said termination of call; and

in response to said reporting (2-12), initiates (2-16, 2-22) said sending of said credit/charging information.

30 7. A method according to claim 6, characterized in that

sending said credit/charging information is triggered by a Service Logic Program being executed in a Service Logic Execution Environment (SLEE) in the Service Control Point (SCP);

the Service Logic Program provides functionality for communicating
5 with an external process through a gateway between services running inside the Service Logic Execution Environment (SLEE) and an external application (WS); and

the credit/charging information is sent using the gateway to the external application (WS) which sends it to the mobile station (MS).

10 8. An arrangement (SCP, WS) for transmitting credit/charging information to a mobile station (MS) in a mobile telecommunications network; characterized in that the arrangement (SCP, WS) is adapted to:

detect a termination (2-10) of a call chargeable to the subscriber of
15 the mobile station (MS); and

in response to said detecting, send said credit/charging information to the mobile station (MS) as a connectionless message (2-26).

9. An arrangement according to claim 8, characterized in that the arrangement comprises a Service Control Point (SCP) of an Intelligent
20 Network, said Service Control Point comprising a Service Logic Program for sending said credit/charging information in response to said detecting.

10. An arrangement according to claim 9, characterized in that the arrangement further comprises a separate processor (WS) for formatting said credit/charging information.

(57) Abstract

A method for transmitting prepaid charging/credit information to a mobile station (MS). The available credit information can be sent to the mobile station by detecting a termination (2-10) of a call chargeable to the subscriber of the mobile station (MS); and in response to the detecting, sending the credit information to the mobile station (MS) as a connectionless message (2-26), preferably as a short message or USSD message. Optionally, releasing the call (2-18) is delayed sufficiently for sending the connectionless message without paging the mobile station (MS) separately.

(Fig. 2)

Fig. 1

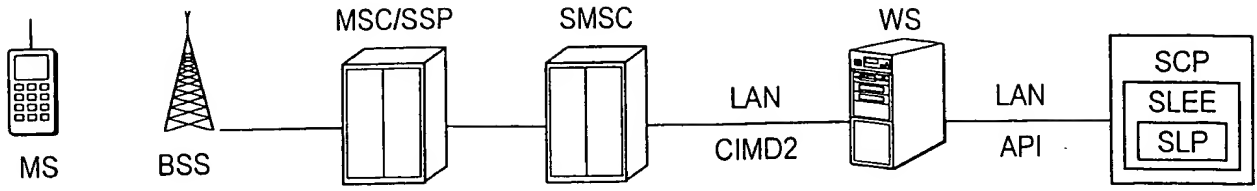


Fig. 2

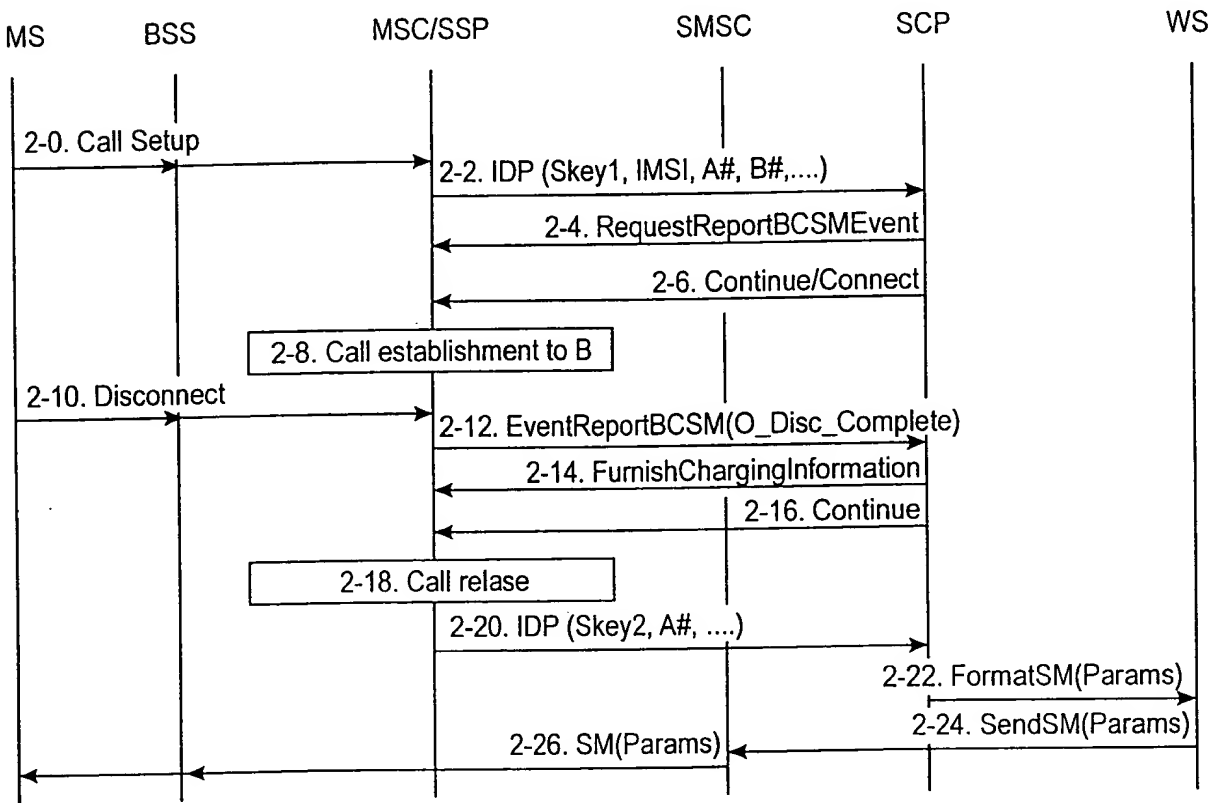
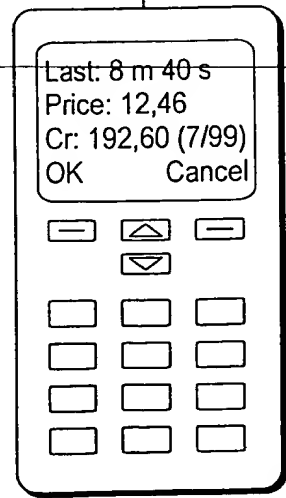


Fig. 3



This Page Blank (uspro)

09.09.99

RECEIVED

10 -09-1999

KOLSTER OY AB

Kolster Oy Ab

Iso Roobertinkatu 23

00120 Helsinki

Patenttihakemus nro: 982098
Luokka: H 04Q / JSA / TIH
Hakija: Nokia Telecommunications Oy
Asiamies: Kolster Oy Ab
Asiamiehen viite: 2980504FI

Määräpäivä 09.03.2000

Patenttihakemuksen numero ja luokka on mainittava kirjelmässä PRH:lle

Suoritetussa uutuustutkimuksessa ovat tulleet esille seuraavat patentoinnin kannalta merkittävänä pidettävät julkaisut: eurooppalaiset hakemusjulkaisut: EP 0734144A2 (H04M 15/28), EP 0647055A1 (H04M 15/28) ja EP 0813332A1 (H04M 15/28), amerikkalainen patenttijulkaisu: US 5109401 (H04M 11/00), PCT-hakemusjulkaisu: WO 97/49226 (H04M 11/00) sekä suomalainen patenttijulkaisu: FI 100500B (H04Q 7/32).

Julkaisussa EP 0734144A2 on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä soitetun puhelun hintatieto välitetään keskukselta päätelaitteelle, esim. lyhytsanomaviestien välityksellä (tiivistelmä, sarake 4 rivit 48-49 ja 56-59, sarake 5 rivi 1, patenttivaatimukset 1, 4, 7, 9 ja 12). Alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, että soitetun puhelun hintatiedot välitetään ainakin laskutettavalle tilaajalle ja että hintatiedot voidaan välittää puhelun päätyttyä. Tällöin alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, mitä on esitetty esillä olevan hakemuksen vaatimuksissa 1-10.

Julkaisussa US 5109401 on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä soitetun puhelun hintatiedot välitetään keskukselta päätelaitteelle, missä päätelaitteelle välitetään ilmoitus puhelun hintatiedon ylittäessä ennalta asetettu raja-arvon ja missä uusi puhelu on mahdollinen vain, jos kertyneen puhelinlaskun arvo on pienempi kuin asetettu raja-arvo (tiivistelmä, sarake 1 rivit 24-27 ja 32-39). Tällöin hintatiedot keskukselta päätelaitteelle voidaan välittää käyttäen varsinaiseen puhelumuodostukseen kuulumatonta signaalointia. Tällöin alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, mitä on esitetty esillä olevan hakemuksen vaatimuksissa 1, 2 ja 5-10.

Julkaisussa WO 97/49226 on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä soitetun puhelun hintatieto välitetään keskukselta päätelaitteelle. Edelleen päätelaitteelle lähetettävällä lyhytsanomaviestillä voidaan asettaa puhelun yksikköhinta (sivu 1 rivit 6-15, sivu 3 rivit 16-21, sivu 9 rivit 25-28, patenttivaatimukset 1 ja 4). Tällöin alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, mitä on esitetty esillä olevan hakemuksen vaatimuksissa 1-10.

Julkaisussa FI 100500B on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä päätelaitteelle välitetään tietoja lyhytsanomaviestejä käyttäen. Edelleen päätelaite

This Page Blank (uspto)

voi käsitellä aiempaan suorittamaansa puheluun liittyviä hintatietoja, ja jotka päätelaite voi edelleen lähettää verkon keskukselle (sivu 1 rivit 16-28, sivu 2 rivit 6-10, sivu 5 rivit 21-24, patenttivaatimukset 1, 2, 8 ja 10). Tällöin alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, että päätelaitteelle voidaan välittää myös puhelun hintatietoja lyhytsanomaviestien avulla.

Julkaisussa EP 0647055A1 on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä soitetun puhelun hintatiedot välitetään keskukselta päätelaitteelle (tiivistelmä, sarake 1 rivit 37-51, kuvio 1, sarake 3 rivit 50-53, sarake 4 rivit 47-50). Tällöin hintatiedot keskukselta päätelaitteelle voidaan välittää käyttäen varsinaiseen puhelunmuodostukseen kuulumatonta signalointia. Tällöin alan ammattimiehelle on ilmeistä, mitä on esitetty esillä olevan hakemuksen vaatimuksissa 1, 2 ja 5-10.

Julkaisussa EP 0813332A1 on esitetty menetelmä ja matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä soitetun puhelun hintatieto välitetään keskukselta päätelaitteelle (tiivistelmä, sarake 1 rivit 50-55, 1. patenttivaatimus).

Kuten edellä esitetyistä julkaisuista käy ilmi, ei esillä olevan hakemuksen patenttivaatimuksien mukaisen keksinnön voida katsoa eroavan oleellisesti siitä mitä ennustaan on tunnettu, joten hakemusta ei voida hyväksyä (PL 2§ 1 mom.). Mikäli hakija kuitenkin haluaa jatkaa hakemuksensa käsittelyä, pyydetään häntä samalla toimittamaan vastaavat suomenkieliset: selostus, vaatimukset, kuviot ja tiivistelmä, sekä lisäksi vastaava ruotsinkielinen tiivistelmä.

Tekniikan tasona esitetään lisäksi PCT-hakemusjulkaisu: WO 97/42772 (H04Q 7/22), missä on esitetty matkaviestinjärjestelmä, missä matkaviestimeltä lähetetään matkaviestinkeskukselle (MSC) lyhytsanoma, joka sisältää matkaviestimen laskutustietoja, ja joka viesti välitetään edelleen laskutuskeskukselle (sivu 3 rivit 1-14).

Tutkijainsinööri
Puhelin: (09) 6939500

Timo Huttunen


Timo Huttunen

Lausumanne huomautusten johdosta on annettava viimeistään yllämainittuna määräpäivänä. Jollette ole antanut lausumanne virastoon viimeistään mainittuna määräpäivänä tai ryhtynyt toimenpiteisiin tässä päätöksessä esitettyjen puutteellisuuksien korjaamiseksi, jätetään hakemus sillensä (patenttilain 15 §). Sillensä jätetty hakemus otetaan uudelleen käsiteltäväksi, jos Te neljän kuukauden kuluessa määräpäivästä annatte lausumanne tai ryhdytte toimenpiteisiin esitettyjen puutteellisuuksien korjaamiseksi ja samassa ajassa suoritatte vahvistetun maksun, 320 mk hakemuksen ottamisesta uudelleen käsiteltäväksi. Jos lausumanne on annettu virastoon oikeassa ajassa, mutta esitettyjä puutteellisuuksia ei ole siten korjattu, että hakemus voitaisiin hyväksyä, se hylätään, mikäli virastolla ei ole aihetta antaa Teille uutta välipäätöstä (patenttilain 16 §). Uusi keksinnön selitys, siihen tehdyt lisäykset ja uudet patenttivaatimukset on aina jätettävä kahtena kappaleena ja tällöin on otettava huomioon patenttiasetuksen 19 §.

Inis Page Blank (uspto)

PATENTTIHAKEMUS NRO	LUOKITUS
982098	H04Q 7/32, H04M 15/28

TUTKITTU AINEISTO
Patenttijulkaisukokoelma (FI, SE, NO, DK, DE, CH, EP, WO, GB, US) tutkitut luokat: H04Q 7/32 sekä lisäksi tutkitut FI-luokat: H04M 3/00, 3/22, 11/00, 15/00, H04Q 3/00, 3/42, 7/20, 7/22, 7/24, 7/26, 7/30, 7/34, 7/38
Tiedonhaut ja muu aineisto Seuraavat tietokannat: EPODOC, WPI, PAJ

VIITEJULKAISUT		
Kategoria*)	Julkaisun tunnistetiedot	Koskee vaatimuksia
X	EP 0734144A2 (H04M 15/28)	1 - 10
X	US 5109401 (H04M 11/00)	1, 2, 5-10
X	WO 97/49226 (H04M 11/00)	1 - 10
X	FI 100500B (H04Q 7/32)	- " -
X	EP 0647055A1 (H04M 15/28)	1, 2, 5-10
X	EP 0813332A1 (H04M 15/28)	- " -
A	WO 97/42772 (H04Q 7/22)	
*) X Patentoitavuuden kannalta merkittävä julkaisu yksinään tarkasteltuna Y Patentoitavuuden kannalta merkittävä julkaisu, kun otetaan huomioon tämä ja yksi tai useampi samaan kategoriaan kuuluva julkaisu A Yleistä tekniikan tasoa edustava julkaisu, ei kuitenkaan patentoitavuuden este		
Päiväys 8. 9. 1999	Tutkija 	

This Page Blank (uspto)